

Your Capitol Voice
Representative Bobby Kaufmann

This week is the final week that bills originating in the House have an opportunity to pass a House Committee. Bills that do not survive this week are more than likely done for this session. I am holding subcommittees, so most bills are not in their final form for me to report to you. Major bills are being crafted and perfected. These include Managed Care reform, mental health, and education. Each of these topics is so important that I will write an entire column about them. Those bills are still in the works so this week I want to write about a major piece of legislation that is ready to run. I have heard from many people about the need for legislation to combat opioid abuse. This past week a bill was released and I will share the highlights with you. I expect this very important legislation to receive bipartisan support and to save lives.

Opioid abuse is a scary reality for many families. This week the House released a bill with three goals:

1. Provide support to Iowans suffering from addiction

In the nationwide attempt to fight opioid abuse, 40 states have passed a Good Samaritan Law. These laws provide legal immunity to someone who has broken the law when calling for emergency medical assistance. This is not an attempt to encourage people to break the law. Drug dealers and repeat offenders would not be covered. This is designed to encourage people to call 911 if they are in a group and someone is dying from an overdose. Too many times people have sat and watched their friends die of an overdose because they were afraid of incriminating themselves. This would provide them a one-time pass to call 911 and get both themselves and the person whose life is in danger to get clean and get help. If someone is experiencing an overdose, we want the opportunity to get them medical attention and intervention.

2. Reduce overprescribing

Statewide prescriptions have dropped by 10% in the last year, but one-third of Iowa still continues to see an increase in opioid prescriptions. The proposed bill would prohibit controlled substance prescriptions from being filled more than six months after the original prescription date. Finally, it prohibits any refills for the most addictive drugs such as hydrocodone.

3. Prevent doctor shopping

You may recall the program that is designed to catch meth producers who attempt to purchase ingredients at various stores. This program has done a great job of reducing the production of meth. A similar program exists to combat opioid abuse but it is underutilized. Currently, only about 45% of all prescribers are signed up to use the prescription monitoring program (PMP). This system identifies and sets up red flags for individuals who go from doctor to doctor to get prescriptions. The new plan will require all prescribers to sign up for PMP. Pharmacies will be required to update the PMP at least once per day to give us real-time tracking. If someone tries to get multiple prescriptions for opioids – we will now be able to catch them. Many providers have complained that the PMP program doesn't work. Many say it's difficult to use and makes it harder for pharmacists and doctors to do their jobs. We have heard those concerns and so the Board of Pharmacy has begun creating and implementing a new state-of-the-art system that will make it easier for prescribers and pharmacists to make updates. I think this is a critical part of the bill.

Capitol visitors: Mary Feuerbach and Durant FCCLA; Pastor Beth Wartick-Trinity Lutheran Church, Laura Twing, Tipton; Beth Ahrens, Pastor Chad Whaley-Bethany Lutheran Church, Frank and Eulyn Frostestad, West Branch.

Listening Post Schedule, February 17:
Palmer House Stable (200 E. Main, SOLON) -1:00 PM

Contact Rep. Kaufmann:

[E-mail-Bobby.Kaufmann@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:Bobby.Kaufmann@legis.iowa.gov)

Phone-515-281-3221

Mail-1527 330th St., Wilton IA 52778